

Message Text

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S E C R E T KINSHASA 5642

LIMDIS

FROM VANCE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, CG, US

SUBJECT: VANCE MISSION: MORE ON US INVESTMENT AND THE ECONOMY

1. IN TALK WITH MOBUTU THIS MORNING, HE AGAIN RAISED SUBJECT OF US COMPANIES WHO HAD THREATENED TO PULL OUT DURING THIS TIME OF ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. HE SPECIFICALLY CITED MORRISON-KNUDSEN WHO, AMBASSADOR HINTON HAD TOLD HIM, WOULD HAVE TO RELEASE ITS EMPLOYEES AND TERMINATE WORK ON INGA-SHABA TRANSMISSION LINE IF Z1 MILLION IN LOCAL CURRENCY WERE NOT MADE AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY. MOBUTU WENT ON TO SAY "I ORDERED THE IMMEDIATE DISBURSEMENT OF Z2 MILLION FROM PRESIDENCY FUNDS, THOUGH THAT MEANT THAT MY OWN OPERATIONS HAD TO BE CURTAILED. I CANNOT UNDERSTAND THIS KIND OF ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF US FIRMS--NOT ONE AMERICAN INVESTMENT HAS BEEN TOUCHED, AS YOU KNOW--AND ESPECIALLY ON THE PART OF MORRISON-KNUDSEN TO WHOM I GAVE THE INGA-SHABA CONTRACT IN THE FACE OF INTENSE GERMAN AND BELGIAN COMPETITION."

2. I ASKED MOBUTU AGAIN IF HE WANTED MORE US INVESTMENT. HE SAID HE DID AND REPEATED THAT US FIRMS HAD NOT BEEN AFFECTED BY 30 DECEMBER MEASURES. HE THEN ASKED IF AMERICANS WRE NOW AFRAID TO COME TO ZAIRE, AND I

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REPLIED THAT THE ELIMA STATEMENT ABOUT NO AMERICAN

BEING LEFT ALIVE IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO MOBUTU HAD BEEN SPREAD WIDELY IN US PRESS AND HAD CAUSED CONSTERNATION. MOBUTU ASKED IF THE SUBSEQUENT ASSURANCES HAD ALSO BEEN WIDELY PLAYED AND I SAID YES, BUT THAT NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE FIRST PERSISTED. I THEN ENCOURAGED THE PRESIDENT TO FIND A WAY TO REASSURE THE AMERICAN COLONY. HE INDICATED HE WOULD CONSIDER THE PROBLEM.

3. WE FINISHED THIS PART OF THE DISCUSSION WITH MOBUTU'S REITERATION THAT HIS ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES WOULD BE OF SHORT DURATION AND THAT BY NEXT YEAR, WHEN COPPER PRICES TURNED UPWARDS, THINGS WOULD BE ALL RIGHT. AUSTERITY MEASURES WERE BEING TAKEN AND GOZ DOING ALL IT COULD ON ITS OWN. IN THE MEANTIME, THE PRESIDENT INSISTED, NO MAJOR PROJECTS SHOULD SLOW DOWN OR STOP. HE WAS ADAMANT ON THIS POINT AND ASKED IF "EXIM COULD TIDE US OVER." I DID NOT RESPOND DIRECTLY TO THIS QUESTION, BUT SAID INSTEAD THAT I WOULD BE MEETING WITH BISENGIMANA AT 1000 TOMORROW TO GET THE FULL PICTURE OF THE ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL SITUATION.
ANDREW

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